

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 574



Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. ANTONIO L. TINIO
and **KABATAAN Party-List Rep. RENEE LOUISE M. CO**

AN ACT
MANDATING THE INCLUSION OF PHILIPPINE HISTORY
AS A SUBJECT IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2014, as part of the so-called “education reforms” under the K to 12 program, the Department of Education (DepEd) through DepEd Order 20 removed Philippine History from the curriculum of high school students. Even as the agency provided no pedagogical basis for the move, its Secretary Leonor Briones admitted that government through her office erased Philippine History from the lessons of high school students, claiming that “discussions of events in Philippine history are naturally integrated in several subjects.”

Teachers, Philippine historians, and sociologists noted that the new curriculum for Social Studies—which expects students to master a broad range of subjects such as Asian studies and world history, as well as economics, culture, society, and politics, to name a few—is patterned after topics created by the United States National Council for Social Studies. Philippine history being pushed off the table, then, is to be expected.

The result: Students learn Philippine History at age 11 to 12 years old, nothing else is taught thereafter until seven years later, when they enter college. For those who do not go to college or enrol in technical and vocational schools, what they heard in elementary school about Andres Bonifacio, Jose Rizal, and the rest of the country’s heroes, about Spanish, American and Japanese colonial periods, or about martial law and contemporary events, were the last things of Philippine History they will ever formally learn.

In 2020, DepEd through its so-called Minimum Learning Competencies further reinforced the horrific sin of erasing Philippine History from the high school curriculum. As several educators and historians note, the new curriculum guide for Araling Panlipunan in Grades 7 to 12 does not mention—not even just once—“Pilipinas,” “Kasaysayan,” or “Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas.” And obvious from the text of the MELC, including its predecessor curriculum guides’, and from actual practice, there is no “natural integration” of Philippine History in Asian History, World History, Economics, and Contemporary Issues (taught in Grades 7, 8, 9, and 10, respectively), especially considering the too-short hours allotted for these subjects and the broad range of topics and competencies therein.

This curriculum change is a far cry from the nationalistic stance being taken by other countries which require their countries’ histories as a separate subject in all levels. Japanese history is a mandatory subject in both junior and senior high school, with Grade 9 and Grade 12 students even being required to take “travelling classrooms” (*idoukyoushitsu*) to historically significant places in some prefectures. In Australia, history is taught as a stand-alone, compulsory subject in Years 7 to 10 (ages 13 to 16) and is organized into two interrelated strands: historical knowledge and understanding (substantive knowledge) and historical inquiry and skills (procedural knowledge). Key Stage 3 students (11 to 14 year-olds) in England’s maintained schools are expected to build up their knowledge from Key Stages 1 and 2 (elementary levels) to develop further consciousness of the significance of events, people, and developments in their historical context and in the present day, and the different interpretations by historians and the reasons therefor and how to assess their validity, among others.

According to the Alyansa ng mga Tagapagtanggol ng Kasaysayan or Tanggol Kasaysayan, the absence of Philippine History in the high school curriculum has created an expansive abyss between history as told in textbooks and analysis of primary source. This abyss needs to be bridged by bringing back Philippine History as a stand-alone subject in high school. History in elementary school relies and focuses on basic facts and civics—for instance, Jose Rizal as a model citizen. Junior and senior high school students must be exposed to different secondary sources, and their study must focus on the critical evaluation of secondary sources and media—for instance, “How is the depiction of Rizal in this journal article different from the depiction of Rizal in that movie? Why?”

The lingering, destructive effects of the absence of Philippine History in the high school curriculum must be stressed, especially in this era where history is easily rewritten and efforts at historical denialism, distortion, and deletion come from all sources—even from government officials and agencies. Filipino children and youth drown in fake news, misinformation, and disinformation by the mere exposure to social media and even traditional media. This goes beyond a problem of a youth asking why Apolinario Mabini was sitting down all throughout a movie. The problem is as profound as the fact that we are becoming a nation that has forgotten who

Apolinario Mabini was—not that he was a polio victim, not as a lawyer. We are turning into a country that has forgotten his importance to the nation, despite being both polio victim and lawyer, as the “Utak ng Himagsikan.”

This goes beyond the issue of why established historical facts such as the dark years under Ferdinand Marcos and his martial law can become merely malleable through a combination of disinformation from his heirs and a bombardment of fake news, Facebook memes, TikTok videos. The infrastructure for education is designed to make Filipinos forget that the ills of tyranny, dictatorship, corruption, and cronyism led to the downfall of an entire nation and economic hardship to past and future generations, and why these ills and the ones responsible for them should be held accountable to the fullest extent, rather than be given a “second chance.”

Indeed, erasing Philippine History in the high school curriculum amounts to a deliberate effort to make Filipinos forget the lessons of the past and our hallmarks and pride as a people and nation, and to render us greatly vulnerable to modern agents of colonization and oppression, at the hands of imperialist powers or another Marcos. There is therefore an urgent necessity to correct this error, to put Philippine History back not just in the blackboards but in the consciousness of the Filipino child and youth.

Approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



Rep. ANTONIO L. TINIO
ACT Teachers Party-List



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Be it enacted in the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. The Department of Education is hereby mandated to include the study of Philippine History as a subject in the curriculum of junior and senior high school.

SEC. 2. In the performance of this mandate, including in the implementation of the preceding Section, the Department shall bear in mind the following objectives:

(1) To inculcate among junior and senior high school students the sense of nationalism and patriotism as embodied by Philippine heroes, important events, and in liberation movements and revolutions;

(2) To emphasize at necessary points particulars such as local history, national minorities, and women;

(3) To expose students to different secondary sources on Philippine history, such as biographies, interpretive and analytical texts, and journals, and spur students' critical evaluation thereof; and

(4) To enable critical thinking and discourse on the effects and relevance of Philippine historical events, persons, and movements to the present.

SEC. 3. Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the Department shall, in consultation with the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, teachers, historians, and other stakeholders, promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to implement this Act. The Department shall likewise, also upon consultation with the abovementioned, prepare the textbooks and instructional materials for the teaching of Philippine History.

SEC. 4. All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, other issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 5. If any portion or provisions of this Act is declared void and unconstitutional, the remaining portions or provisions hereof shall not be affected by such declaration.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,